

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 5113

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DEPT ONLY FOR ARA/PAN

ARA/PAN ALSO PASS DEPUTY NEGOTIATOR GENERAL DOLVIN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: 0*94, PN

SUBJECT: TREATY NEGOTIATIONS-LANDS AND WATERS SUB-GROUP

REF: PANAMA 4730

SUMMARY: PANAMANIAN LANDS AND WATERS SUB-GROUP MEMBERS HAVE INDICATED STRONG DESIRE FOR FURTHER ROUND OF TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON COMMENCING ON OR ABOUT SEPTEMBER 10. HOWEVER, THIS WOULD BE FEASIBLE FOR THEM ONLY IF INITIATED BY INVITATION FROM AMBASSADOR BUNKER TO CHIEF NEGOTIATOR BOYD THAT RESPECTIVE SUB-GROUPS MEET. THEY ASKED THAT THIS APPROACH BE TREATED WITH EXTREME CONFIDENCE; IT WAS MADE WITH KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT OF PANAMANIAN GROUP LEADER EDWIN FABREGA, AND OF BOYD, BUT FACTORS WITHIN GOP MADE IT INADVISABLE THAT THEY APPEAR TO HAVE INSTIGATED SUCH AN INVITATION. THEY FORESEE THESE DISCUSSIONS AS EFFORT TO REACH TECHNICAL AGREEMENT, AD REFERENDUM TO CHIEF NEGOTIATORS, BEFORE END OF THIS YEAR. END SUMMARY.

1. ON JULY 15, PANAMANIAN LANDS AND WATERS TECHNICAL SUB-GROUP MEMBERS FLAVIO VELASQUEZ AND OMAR JAEN RE-
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QUESTED PRIVATE MEETING WITH EMBOFF TO DISCUSS PROGRESS

OF THEIR GROUP'S WORK AND FUTURE PLANS. THEY HAD RECENTLY BRIEFED FOREIGN MINISTER/CHIEF NEGOTIATOR BOYD ON PROGRESS OF THEIR FACT-FINDING EXERCISE. ALL OF THOSE DIRECTLY INVOLVED ON PANAMANIAN SIDE, THEY SAID, WERE GENERALLY WELL SATISFIED WITH RESULTS OF THESE ACTIVITIES AND (WITH A FEW INDIVIDUAL EXCEPTIONS) WITH RECEPTION AND COOPERATION GIVEN TO THEM BY PANCANAL, SOUTHCOM AND OTHER USG AGENCIES IN CANAL ZONE.

2. HOWEVER, IT WAS THEIR VIEW THAT THIS EXERCISE HAD ABOUT RUN ITS COURSE. COMPLETION OF CURRENTLY-PLANNED ACTIVITIES, AND FULFILLMENT OF VARIOUS OUTSTANDING REQUESTS FOR MAPS OR INFORMATION DEALING WITH CURRENT USG ACTIVITIES IN CANAL ZONE, COULD BE FORESEEN WITHIN NEXT FEW WEEKS AT MOST. THEY FORESAW POSSIBLE NEED TO REQUEST FURTHER ITEMS OF INFORMATION, OR BRIEFINGS ON SPECIFIED SUBJECTS, IN ORDER TO CLEAR UP PARTICULAR QUESTIONS OR PROVIDE THEM WITH AMMUNITION TO USE WITHIN THEIR OWN SYSTEM ON SPECIFIC POINTS. BUT OVERALL PROGRAM OF ACTIVITIES WHICH THEY HAD SUGGESTED APPEARED ABOUT COMPLETED, AND THEY FELT IT WAS TIME FOR US AND PANAMANIAN MEMBERS OF LANDS AND WATERS SUB-GROUP TO CONSIDER WHERE TO GO NEXT.

3. THEIR VIEW, WITH WHICH THEY STATED FABREGA WAS IN FULL ACCORD, WAS THAT NEXT STEP SHOULD BE FURTHER ROUND OF TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS AT SUB-GROUP LEVEL, ALONG LINES SUGGESTED PARA 11 REFTTEL, WITH OBJECTIVE OF PRODUCING A MUTUALLY-AGREED MAP REFLECTING A POSITION ON LANDS AND WATERS ISSUE WHICH BOTH TECHNICAL SUB-GROUPS COULD ENDORSE, AD REFERENDUM TO CHIEF NEGOTIATORS. THEIR GROUP'S PREFERENCE WAS THAT THIS ROUND OF TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS BE HELD IN WASHINGTON, AND THAT IT BEGIN ON OR ABOUT SEPTEMBER 10 WITH INTENTION OF CONTINUING FOR A MONTH OR MORE UNLESS SUBSTANTIVE PROGRESS ALLOWED COMPLETION SOONER. PARTICIPANTS ON PANAMANIAN SIDE WOULD BE VELASQUEZ AND JAEN, WITH FABREGA HOLDING HIMSELF READY TO TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON AT SUCH TIMES AS HIS PRESENCE APPEARED ADVISABLE.
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IF ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY FROM US SIDE, THESE DISCUSSIONS COULD BE HELD IN PANAMA, BUT SHOULD THEN TAKE PLACE AT QUARRY HEIGHTS. HOWEVER, THEIR STRONG PREFERENCE WAS WASHINGTON, WHICH THEY FELT WOULD SERVE BEST INTERESTS OF TECHNICAL SUB-GROUP MEMBERS ON BOTH SIDES.

4. THEY WENT ON TO STATE, HOWEVER, THAT DYNAMICS OF

PANAMANIAN "POLITICAL GROUP" CONCERNED WITH NEGOTIATIONS AT THIS TIME WERE SUCH THAT WHILE PANAMANIAN TECHNICAL TEAM COULD ACCEPT AN INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS IN WASHINGTON, THEY COULD NOT THEMSELVES SUGGEST IT. ACCORDINGLY, WITH FABREGA'S KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT, THEY WISHED TO REQUEST THAT US SIDE INVITE SUCH A ROUND OF TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS, AS FOLLOW-ON TO THEIR CURRENT ACTIVITIES IN CANAL ZONE, BY MEANS OF A MESSAGE FROM AMBASSADOR BUNKER TO CHIEF NEGOTIATOR BOYD. THEY ASKED THAT THIS APPROACH, OF WHICH THEY STATED THAT BOYD WAS AWARE, BE HELD BY US IN STRICTEST CONFIDENCE.

5. IN VIEW OF APPROACHING END OF FACT-FINDING EXERCISE, AND SHORTENING TIME BEFORE THE END OF THIS YEAR, WHEN THEY FORESAW THAT LANDS AND WATERS TECHNICAL AGREEMENT WOULD BE NEEDED, THEY REQUESTED THAT EMBOFF CONVEY THEIR APPROACH TO US NEGOTIATORS AND ASKED THAT WE ADVISE THEM OF OUR REACTION AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

6. COMMENT: EMBASSY CONCURS WITH PANAMANIAN MEMBERS' ASSESSMENT THAT CURRENT FACT-FINDING EXERCISE WILL HAVE ABOUT RUN ITS USEFUL COURSE WITHIN NEXT COUPLE OF WEEKS. FURTHER ROUND OF TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS SUGGESTED BY PANAMANIANS APPEARS TO US TO BE A NEXT LOGICAL STEP. REQUEST GUIDANCE FROM US NEGOTIATORS AS TO HOW WE MAY RESPOND TO THIS APPROACH, AND IN PARTICULAR INDICATION OF WHETHER WE WILL BE ABLE TO EXTEND THE INVITATION SOLICITED BY THE PANAMANIAN SUB-GROUP MEMBERS. END COMMENT.

JORDEN

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